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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1289  
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0286  
RHMFIASS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU PRIORITY  
RHMFIASS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFIASS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY  
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RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000552

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TAGS: PREL MOPS MARR FR GE SP AU TU

SUBJECT: TURKISH GENERAL STAFF TAKING A HARDER LINE WITH  
ALLIED MISSIONS

REF: A. IIR 6 898 0130 07  
    **1**B. IIR 6 898 0158 07  
    **1**C. ANKARA 0531

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

**11.** (C) The Turkish General Staff (TGS), in some cases fronted by the Foreign Ministry, is taking a harder line on routine military cooperation with allies.

-- Ankara-based diplomats told us that blanket overflight clearances granted to France, Germany, Spain, and Canada for support to Operation Enduring Freedom were abruptly terminated by the government over the past two weeks (ref a). MFA Aviation Department Head Hamit Olcay explained to us March 6 that the French OEF blanket clearance permission, granted in 2001, had lapsed in 2003 but flights had been allowed to continue until now. When asked about the timing of the GOT termination announcement, Olcay admitted that Turkish-French tension over the French national assembly's vote of a law criminalizing denial of an Armenian genocide played a role. He added that the French were welcome to reapply for a blanket clearance. Olcay admitted no knowledge of terminated blanket clearances for Germany and other allies. The German political counselor confirmed that their clearance, also issued in 2001, had lapsed, but saw no political motive for the Turkish move. She noted that German OEF support flights rarely transit Turkey, so loss of the blanket clearance had little effect on operations.

-- A UK Poloff told us March 8 that the UK mission in Ankara was perplexed by a series of recent incidents involving the Turkish military. She reported that DCHOD GEN Ergin Saygun had sought to postpone, at short notice, an official visit to the UK planned for mid-March. The TGS had also requested a postponement of upcoming high-level defense talks scheduled for the third week in March. They offered an overburdened schedule as the excuse for the postponements (ref b). Finally, the UK ambassador was discouraged from making a courtesy visit to a small UK detachment at Incirlik airbase when informed that both the base commander and his deputy would be too busy to see him.

-- The Australian DCM told us March 8 that her embassy was having difficulties organizing annual ANZAC day commemorations at Gallipoli, having been informed by the TGS that Australian officials were prohibited from coordinating event preparations with local Turkish Armed Forces commanders. Contrary to past practice, she reported, the

Australians were told they may now only work through TGS headquarters staff in Ankara.

-- In our own case, we have been notified by TGS that US flag officer visitors would no longer be accorded distinguished visitor courtesies at Turkish airports unless specifically invited by the TGS (ref c). The TGS notification said the policy change was the result of lack of DV treatment for Turkish flag officer visitors to the US (Note. This seemed to refer to the lack of VIP reception facilities at US commercial airports. End Note). In addition, the TGS requested on March 8 that the Combined Planning Conference (CPC), part of our High-Level Defense Group agenda and long scheduled for April, be postponed to May due to heavy workload at TGS.

2 (C) Comment. Since becoming CHOD at the end of August 2006, GEN Buyukanit has significantly tightened procedures and paid more attention to reciprocity issues in dealing with allied missions. The timing and motivation for the actions described above raise questions, however. With the possibility of Congress passing an Armenian genocide resolution in the coming weeks and a likely harsh public and official Turkish response, we are watching the French-Turkish military relationship with particular interest. We will continue to monitor Turkish military attitudes and actions with regard to our operations and those of our allies in this critical region. End Comment.

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